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THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE'S STATEMENT OF HIS OWN CONDUCT AND PRINCIPLES.

CONTAINING ALSO

A comparative View of the French, and American Revolutions.
Of the Condition of the People of both Countries.
Of the Characters of Waſhington, Ariſtides, and Themiſtocles.
Character and Deſcription of the Court of France.
Of the Jacobin Society.
Tiny Symptoms of great Revolutions.
A Reformation in Parliament: wherein dangerous.
A Board of Oeconomy recommended.
A Sermon to our H—— of C——.
A Prayer to the Miniſter.
A Reformation in the Church, recommended for the Purpoſe of liquidating the National Debt.
Biſhops—wherein a Curſe to every Nation.
Lawyers—wherein a Bleſſing.
Strictures upon Meſſrs. Burke, and Paine.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,

AND MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE

WHIG CLUB.

Whether we conſider him as a Soldier, or as a Citizen,
"Nature might ſtand up and ſay to all the World,
"This was a Man." SHAKESPEARE.

Confounded be the barbarous Pen for ever,
That would beſpatter the unſullied Robe
Of a good Man.

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TO THE

MEMBERS

OF THE

WHIG CLUB.

MY LORDS, AND GENTLEMEN,

THE numberleſs inconcluſive debates, which that ſomething called the Conſtitution, has (as a ſubject) afforded in the political world, make us apt to conſider it, as an imaginary ſomething, of an undefinable nature, which never fails in leaving an ample ſcope for new conjectures: and in daily clearing the way of the old, for new diſcuſſions, as well in both houſes, as elſewhere. It is readily admitted in all quarters, that there exiſts a very material diſtinction between this ſomething, and the law, which ſhould be carefully obſerved on all occaſions, yet the terms are generally con-

 founded

founded in the ideas, and promiſcuouſly uſed for each other, when the ſubject requires a juſt diſcrimination. This miſconception naturally generates an impropriety in the proceedings, as well as in the language, and the ſubſtantial merits of a juſt cauſe, on the one ſide, become cruelly overturned by the mere letter of the law on the other, too frequently to the injury of the ſubject.

Mr. Paine perplexed with this confuſion of ideas, very frankly confeſſes, that he cannot diſcover, nay, poſitively aſſerts, that there exiſts no ſuch thing as a Conſtitution in England. If this be true, the conſtitutional ſocieties, nay, the parliaments, have ſtrangely miſpent their time theſe two or three centuries paſt; the firſt in exerting the utmoſt efforts of the moſt noble principles for the ſupport and protection of a mere nothing, and the latter in debating upon it.

Mr. Paine ſeems ſtrongly inclined to take ſome reſt upon the negative ground, and transfer the taſk of producing this Conſtitution to others, in challenging any man to produce

produce it; but he does not tell us what a Conſtitution is. If he has ſeen the prototype in any other country, he could not be at a loſs in deſcribing what he calls for; the deſcription is neceſſary to make the challenge fair; but to call for what he cannot, or at leaſt does not deſcribe, leaves himſelf at full liberty to object to every thing that may be offered.

When he propoſes to compare the Conſtitution of France, with the No-conſtitution of England, he ſinks into the common error in producing the common law, and ſeems at as great a loſs in diſcovering a Conſtitution in France as in England. The new laws of France undoubtedly excel the old of England; though not the conſtitutional; but they were formed under different influences; the laws of France were the generous effuſions of a moment of general exultation, when the Conſtitution was free, and uncontrouled in its operation, and laws formed in a criſis of ſuch expanſions, ſeldom fail in captivating the paſſions. But the old laws of England were partially formed to accommodate particular

intereſts, and paſſions, while the unconſulted Conſtitution lay ſtill bound down in its ſhackles;—thoſe laws were not to be deemed conſtitutional, becauſe the Conſtitution had not the power to act, until the independent whig barons entered the field, and procured it ſome liberty; and the new, or conſtitutional code, may be ſaid to bear its date from that period. The jealous eye of controul has been ever fixed upon its progreſs; but firmly ſupported, it has grown hardily, though ſlowly, and ſtill continues to make its progreſs to the moſt enviable degree of perfection. Moſt of the old laws, are either repealed, or grown obſelete, and there is little doubt, but the remaining few, will ſhare their fate, when produced to the injury of the ſubject.

What Mr. Paine calls the Conſtitution of France, was formed in three years, and laſted one! I do not mean to ſpeak this by way of ſarcaſm: I revere the Conſtitution of every free country, though it ſhould be ſo far governed by circumſtances, as to render an annual modification a matter of neceſſity; I only mean to infer, that ſome reſpect is due to a theory,

theory, which has been approved in the ordeal of practice.

The word Conſtitution (pre-annexing the conſequent ſyſtem of its operation) to me ſignifies the opinion which the underſtanding forms upon the merits of a ſubject under its conſideration. But when this opinion is declared, and the declaration is recorded with the general aſſent of the people, that declaration becomes an act, which I call a law of the country. The general opinion of a people, is the Conſtitution of the country, they inhabit: and when that opinion is declared and recorded, the declaration becomes the law, by which they ſhould be governed, and by no other, however abſurd it may appear to ſtrangers.

The diſtinction between the Law, and the Conſtitution, is that which we perceive between the active and the paſſive, or the power, and the agent. The law deprived of the Conſtitution, like a body deprived of the ſoul, is paſſive in its own nature; an agent of neceſſity, which can neither act of itſelf, nor alter itſelf. But the Conſtitution, as the creative power, can alter it, give it action, adapt it

to

to every ſhape that circumſtances may aſſume, and if neceſſary, annihilate it. The Conſtitution is eternal—the law proviſional—a mere report of caſes, a memorandum-book to the underſtanding, which aſſiſts it in conſidering the merits of the caſe preſent with a review of its operation upon thoſe paſt, and the paſt, thus frequently reviewed, and corrected, become organized into as perfect a ſyſtem as their nature will admit; and the operation of the ſoul is not more evident in the human body, than that of the Conſtitution in the laws.

In all debates the Conſtitution muſt be produced, and appealed to: either in the ſhape of an arbitrator, or of a jury, otherwiſe the debate will be indefinite. The practice of all courts of civil record, is governed by it. A man's cauſe, after having paſſed through the neceſſary forms of the court, is pleaded, and ſtated to the jury, and the opinion it declares upon its merits, is called a verdict. Former laws, and precedents, may be produced to aſſiſt the underſtanding of the jury, but not to controul it; the underſtanding being the creative power,

power, is above the letter of the law, and ſhould form its opinion, according to its idea of juſtice; without paying any other regard to the letter of law, or precedent, than in the aſſiſtance it may afford in making a juſt diſcrimination.

But as it is well known in thoſe courts, that the people, of whom the jury is compoſed, generally conſidering themſelves governed by the letter of the law, frequently produce a verdict which does not proceed from the judgement; the injured party is ſuffered, by virtue of a writ of error, to remove his cauſe into the court of chancery; there the underſtanding diſplays the innate authenticity of its power, waves aſide the letter of the law, and proceeds to form its opinion, according to its idea of juſtice, and thus with the lords in the laſt appeal.

We may hereby perceive that in all proceedings, the underſtanding is appealed to, and that no law, of whatever magnitude, nor code of laws, however conſtitutional, are to be conſidered as the Conſtitution, becauſe we may

may appeal from either to the Conſtitution, but not from the Conſtitution to any other power. The power of thinking, and judging, is free, and beyond the reach of human controul. The ſtrongeſt effort of human tyranny to that end, is the depriving us of the liberty of declaring our ſentiments.

In this act we are rendered dumb and incommunicable in our grievances. We are as it were, bound down in a dark ſubterraneous dungeon, and viſited only by the inſolence of avarice, or reſentment, to whom life and property become an eaſy prey. A government in ſuch an attempt, betrays a conſciouſneſs not only of wicked intentions, but alſo of ſome inherent vileneſs in its own nature, the repreſentation of which, would make it appear deteſtable even in its own eyes; this reſtraint takes away the charming manlineſs, and dignity, from a man's actions, which Heaven deſigned for their government. In this privation, a man's wretchedneſs will be in proportion to the quality of his feelings.

The more inſenſible, the leſs unhappy, though further removed from that divinity of excellence, attributed to the human intelligence; to ſuffer ſo unjuſt an humiliation, would be pardonable only in a being, merely ſenſitive: or in the treacherous frailty of a coward, to whom honour never condeſcended to dictate a ſentiment, nor to diſcover any thing more glorious, than the mere privilege of breathing. A man of ſpirit would ſcorn exiſtence, upon a condition ſo inſolent, and degrading; the freedom of the Conſtitution ceaſes, with that, of declaring our ſentiments; or what is now called, the liberty of the preſs.

This liberty, (ſo little known in moſt other countries) is a bleſſing, which we derive from the ſtaunch virtue, and firmneſs of the Britiſh whigs, to whoſe protection it ſtands bequeathed from generation to generation for ever. To expatiate ſo far upon this ſubject, by way of information, to the beſt informed men in this, or perhaps any other country, would very juſtly incur a charge of vanity; but I think it neceſ-

ſary, in vindicating our deſpiſed underſtanding, to prove that our admiration, is not to be excited by a mere nothing, and that we are not ignorant of the nature, extent, and importance, of the bleſſing we enjoy, nor inſenſible of the degree of gratitude, in which we ſtand indebted to its protectors.

The ſufferings of that unblemiſhed patriot, the expatriated Marquis de la Fayette, may be highly pleaſing, and gratifying to the eager paſſions, of the natural enemies of human happineſs *, whoſe nature it is, to be unnatural in their feelings, except when they diſplay them in exhibiting the innate cowardice of their own hearts, when themſelves are doomed to ſuffer; yet to a ſociety of men, who feel like men, for the miſeries of mankind, they muſt appear not only affecting, and intereſting, but alſo alarmingly inſtructive.

The following tranſlation of ſome extracts from the General's letters, is moſt reſpect-

* The Jacobins may wear the fool's cap, if they cannot transfer it.

fully

fully preſented for your peruſal, confident that you will overlook its demerits, in conſidering the ſincerity with which

I am,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your Wellwiſher,

The TRANSLATOR.

THE TRANSLATOR'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THE letters of the Marquis de la Fayette, being chiefly written upon family concerns, could never have been intended to meet the public eye; but the illiberal wantonneſs of jacobin pens, has operated ſo far, as to induce his friends to collect what political matter they contained, and mould it into its preſent ſhape.

It would be rather unkind, if not rigid, to expect literary merit where none was intended; eſpecially in letters written under circumſtances of ſuch harſh, though *moral* reſtraint, the uſe of pen, ink, and paper, being procured by mere ſtratagem. The inclination of the common jailer, who now holds him in his *hoſpitable protection*, is certainly well ſuited to the nature of his power; his talents how-

however weak, and pitiable, they may appear to ſurly Cynics, are yet perfectly equal to the taſk of keeping his power in full exerciſe; they will not ſuffer it to ruſt with reſt; whilſt the caprice of the meaneſt paſſion is ungratified, no ſagacity more ſagacious in ſcenting out objects to practice upon, and no delight, ſo delightful to him, as that which he derives from a new mode of diſcipline. In ſhort, it is well known, that his *humane*, *pious*, *kind*, *generous*, *polite*, *hoſpitable*, *flexible*, *pacific*, and *open* nature, is ſo diſtant from any thing booriſh, brutiſh, cruel, covetous, haughty, moroſe, mean, rapacious, ſanguinary, ſullen, turbulent, or any of thoſe bugaboo vices which the giants of old poſſeſſed, to the terror of their neighbours, that he ſeems to have been elected *una voce*, by the eccleſiaſtics of all degrees, from the cardinal to the rector, to repreſent their true nature, paſſions, and principles; and I ſhould be exceedingly happy to ſee other conſtituents repreſented with equal juſtneſs, fidelity, and integrity.

THE

THE

MARQUIS

TO HIS

SCHOOLFELLOW.

SECLUDED as I am from the perplexing buſtle of a buſy world, my letter to you, dear ſchoolfellow *, may in ſome meaſure be deemed from the dead, to the living; or in other terms, from the ſpirit of a departed friend.

Moſt cordially indifferent about the manner of my fate, I feel myſelf above the grief of its inflictions; nor can it engage my attention more than the fading remembrance of ſome paſt operation. The mind, thus detached

* To inſert this gentleman's name at large would be imprudent in the preſent ſituation of affairs; but his ſufferings in his ſpirited oppoſition to the old government, point him out very ſufficiently to thoſe who are well acquainted with the modern politics of France.

from

from the ſoliciting intereſts, and prejudices of the paſſions, reſumes the ſerene dignity of its native independence, and acquires the power of taking an impartial review of its own former line of conduct; and alſo of judging how far that, has correſponded with, or deviated from, thoſe of integrity and juſtice. Its reflections on this head, produce thoſe pleaſing, or irkſome ſenſations, which are ſaid to conſtitute its everlaſting happineſs, or perturbation.

Experience will ever prove, that no character is ſo liable to be involved into diſagreeable embarraſſments, as that, which (in matters of opinion) attaches itſelf ſtrictly to the dictates of juſtice. He muſt not hope to be a perfect partiſan—all parties interſect their political ſyſtems, with convenient errors, and he that diſſents even from their errors, is ſuſpected to diſſent from the whole;—his dignity muſt condeſcend to mean flexibilities, and the acute artifices of fineſſe, which, however they may degrade the man, are deemed neceſſary to form what is called the profound politician. Had you but known the virtue of theſe glorious little ſubtilties ſome time back, it might

have

have convinced you of the hazardous imprudence to which the honeſt bluntneſs of integrity, is liable in the hour of danger; and alſo of the impolitic ſimplicity, of that philoſophic pride, which diſdains to regard any advantages it may derive from a mean action. It might alſo point out the ſucceſs of thoſe valorous Falſtaffs, who now gallantly ruſh into conſpicuouſneſs, yet who were prudent enough to lie cloſely concealed in a very remote ſhade in the back ground, while intrepid ſimpletons ſtood the firſt, and moſt potent ſhock. Such prudence, might have well enabled you to elude the vengeance of the old government, particularly as (with regard to you) its inconſiſtencies, betrayed an inclination rather to ſeduce than perſecute: well aſſured that your firmneſs would not diſgrace the condeſcenſion of its reſentment. The event juſtified the opinion entertained, and oppreſſion ſeemed to perceive ſomething ominous to its power, in the manly fortitude, and equanimity, with which you ſuffered the rigour of its decrees. It is now my turn to ſuffer, with the difference of additional aggravations. Your ſufferings were ſacred to every good heart.—I enjoy the

pleaſures

pleaſures of conſcious innocence, without any intruſion of pity from either ſide. Your enemies, could not avoid envying you the honour annexed to your ſituation ;—but my character is become a feathered ſhuttlecock, which both parties, beat to each other, in the wantonneſs of play, deeming the ſide diſgraced upon which it ſhould happen to fall. A ſtrange combination of unfortunate circumſtances, not only overpowered my moſt ſpirited, and well-meaning efforts, in reſiſting the horrid deſpotiſm of licentiouſneſs, but alſo drew upon me the vengeance of a ſociety, whoſe principles, like thoſe of religion, are degenerated from their primitive purity, to the ſpecies of deſpotiſm they affect to deteſt, but yet exerciſe in the humour of every whim, to thoſe degrees, that exalt capriciouſneſs, from a ſtate of ridiculous inſignificance, to the ſerious importance of criminality. The inſtitutors of this ſociety were men of unblemiſhed integrity, and formed it upon principles ſo noble, in an hour of ſuch imminent danger, that the genius of France, ſeemed to have taken its reſidence with them, and conſequently the confidence of the people, who conſidered it as the ordeal,

of political principles. The apprehenſions of danger abating, the groſs and weak, indulging the vanity natural to them, picked up principles for faſhion ſake, though ignorant of their nature. Pleaſed with the novelty, they ſtrutted into view, in all the coxcomb fopperies that the extravagance of whim, and colours could afford, diſplaying themſelves with the anxious ambition of deformed people, ſeemingly regardleſs of what ſenſe you noticed them in, provided they were but noticed. Mere profeſſion, being then deemed a ſufficient qualification, to entitle a man, to become a a member of this ſociety, it ſoon began to ſwell up with lumberſome combuſtibles, who, though conſidered as poor harmleſs expletives, were deemed a great acquiſition by ſome, who, through an over fondneſs for numbers, were proud to ſee the numeration table well filled, without well conſidering the power of numbers, nor the infinite variety of purpoſes they were liable to produce, nor yet how far weak men were liable to be duped into wicked agencies.

If we can ſuppoſe ſuch beings to think at all, they are ſuppoſed to mean well in their thoughts; too weak to be thought capable of any thing like deſign, we are apt to make large allowances for their errors, in compliment to the high idea we naturally entertain of our own abilities. The imprudence of admitting ſuch a deſcription, laid the ſociety open to proſtitution, and the enemy were too clear-ſighted not to foreſee the many advantages ſo powerful an engine, was likely to afford them.

Speaking thus far of the character of a people, who now muſt be conſidered as the Jacobin Society, I would not wiſh to adopt their own mode of judging:—to judge without other proof than the mere phrenzy of conjecture, would be unmanly. People who are not apt to catch diſtempers from remorſe, may find the mode convenient—knaves admire it—diſcuſſion may ruin their ſchemes—weak men, dreading the labour of reaſoning, as a taſk never deſigned them by nature, approve the mode;—good ſenſe is uſeleſs—it is not the intereſt of one, nor in the nature of

the other, to have any thing at all to do with it. I need not fear a charge of declamation: It has been too clearly proved, that ſome of the moſt violent leaders, of that ſociety have been notorious impoſtors, and emiſſaries from the common enemy; and if we may infer a ſimilarity of principles, from a ſimilarity of manners, there is ſtill an undetected remnant, whoſe curſed heads nurſe the ſeeds, of thoſe various future evils, which will put the good ſenſe of France to the teſt; in chooſing whether it is to be governed, by the lawful repreſentatives of the nation at large, or by the deſpotiſm, which the plauſibility of a corrupted licentiouſneſs will endeavour to impoſe upon it the liberty.—The very exiſtence of the nation depends upon the choice.

In time of peace, this ſociety, as at firſt inſtituted, may be very uſeful in pointing out any encroachments of government upon the liberties of the people. But when the country is at war with foreign nations, this ſociety ſhould be ſuſpended, or elſe the country muſt fight in fetters; artful emiſſaries find little difficulty in converting weak men, into inſtruments,

ments, affecting to admire them for excellencies, which the hyperborean nature of the ſoil could never produce, they wind up their vanity, and take poſſeſſion of the heart, by aſtoniſhing them with the new diſcovery of their importance. Rendered thus far ductile, the evil genius, holds up the *ignis fatuus* of ſuſpicion to their ignorance, tempts them along, until it thinks proper to act upon the nitrous portion in their compoſition, and ſecurely level deſtructive thunders, at the devoted object, and it is not difficult to foreſee what characters are likely to be ſacrificed.

The vital ſpark of liberty (phyſically ſpeaking) in its infant ſtate, has nothing ſo much to dread as a ſuperabundance of idiotic phlegm, for though it derives its corporeal ſtrength therefrom, yet when it forces its way into the ſacred preſence chamber of reaſon, all the charming ſtructures, and ſcenes of order, are demoliſhed, and a fulmination of chaotic diſtractions enſues, which transforms the whole of the noble ſyſtem, into ſo dangerous a monſter, that its deſtruction becomes neceſſary to the honour, and ſafety of its own former ſpecies,

cies. Such was the monſter, which lately broke looſe from the chains applied by reaſon, and ruſhed forth in the open face of day, furiouſly overturning all things, that bore any appearance of reſiſtance, and marked its horrid career with blood, and deſtruction, confounding the innocent, with the guilty in one promiſcuous ruin.

The legiſlative body, terrified at the rudeneſs, of ſuch deſperate outrageouſneſs, ſuffered itſelf to be dictated into meaſures, which the neceſſity of the moment only, could juſtify, or rather apologize for. It was my misfortune to oppoſe the progreſs of ſuch violence, with the utmoſt ſpirit I was maſter of, and my overthrow was the conſequence of the conteſt. Reduced to the neceſſity of yielding my neck to the murderer's knife, or of availing myſelf of the alternative, which the law of nature, and reaſon afforded, I preferred a ſubmiſſion to any law, rather than to the blind vengeance of a fury, which was governed by no law. My enemies rejoiced at my eſcape.—It gave perſecution the important appearance of vigilance, and alſo gave their unjuſt, or pre-

pretended ſuſpicions, an apparent juſtification. In a moment of general ferment, when the minds of the people were too far agitated to exerciſe their judgment, in penetrating farther than mere appearances. I readily acquit my enemies of perſonal, reſentment, becauſe I am not conſcious of having merited any.

Future generals, and men in high offices, will find that it is the conſpicuous nature of their ſituation, which will attract the undigeſted effuſions of thoſe groſs humours. Rude and capricious wantonneſſes, which ever were, and ever will be, inſeperable from the nature of republican governments, wherein the legiſlative body, is compelled to become an amanuenſis in regiſtering the will, and pleaſure, of its deſpotic, and miſcellaneous highneſs, the mob, when it condeſcends to grant the honour of a viſit in *propria perſona*.

The man, who at that time holds any thing of importance in truſt, ſtands in the precarious ſituation of an accuſed perſon: his head and heart are put to a hard teſt; the argus of doubts, fears, jealouſies, and too often of far worſe

&c's. has its miſcellaneous eyes, upon the perpetual roll at both, to diſcover which may be attacked with moſt hope of ſucceſs. In ſuch a perilous criſis, the man of integrity, is moſt liable to lay himſelf open to the attack, becauſe moſt apt to lean upon the confidence due to him, by indulging the judgment, in well intended little liberties, which are eaſily interpreted into heinous treſpaſſes, upon the minute nettings, of minute forms.

To you my dear fellow, it would be needleſs to ſay any thing in my own defence; you can eaſily anticipate what I ſhould ſay, the ſecrets of our hearts, being ever open to each other; the prompt congeniality that appeared in our juvenile obſervations upon certain ſubjects, has united us in a principle, which we ſhall never bluſh to profeſs; becauſe, founded on a baſis, whoſe ſtability, like that of truth, will ever ſurvive the rude aſſaults, even of thoſe unforeſeen tempeſts, and hurricanes, which ſometimes make ſuch devaſtations in the political hemiſphere, and whoſe furious aſpect ſo terrifies human nature, that it would be deemed temerity, to ſhew a ſymptom of any

any principle which did not concur with the all-ſwaying torrent; neither will I intrude a formal juſtification upon my country, in its diſtracted ſtate. Its infirmitities are ſacred to me—its reproaches are ſacred to me—its diſtreſſes diſtract my very ſoul. But as a great deal of leiſure time, is one of thoſe advantages which my ſituation affords me, it would be unkind in me to deny my friends, the benefit of a portion in correſpondence; intereſted in our fortunes, they claim it as a matter of right. Our integrity admitted in their kind partiality, (whether ſucceſsful or otherwiſe, in our enterprizes) their enquiry naturally drifts at the manner of our conduct, to diſcover whether we had prudently ſecured a protection for our miſcarriages, under the teſted ſhield of precedent, by adopting the ſafe, though humble line of imitation; or whether fancying the reſources of own abilities, equal to the demands of any contingencies: we had boldly launched into the more dangerous, though more honourable wilds of originality. And in either caſe, whether our meaſures, had been ſtudiouſly digeſted into a regular ſyſtem, wherein the ſprings of action, with their collaterals, were ſo diſpoſed,

as apparently to maintain due harmony in producing the end propoſed; that thus informed, they may be enabled to judge how far we were governed by neceſſity, or indebted to the unalienable merit of our own abilities.

Such is the nature of the enquiries, which we muſt expect from the anxiety of our friends: and though to ſatisfy ſuch curioſity (with the candour, and frankneſs, due to the dignity of friendſhip), we may be inſenſibly led into a hiſtory of our political principles, yet as no apprehenſion could ever impoſe the concealment of them upon me, my motives in denying ſome little gratification that way, may at this juncture ſeem myſterious.

Whoever will conſider the ſoil, fertility, and climate of France, will not heſitate to imagine it, as deſigned for a paradiſe of wealth and happineſs, wherein no perſon could be ſuppoſed to experience the foreign nature of diſtreſs; but on viewing the extreme miſeries of its wretched inhabitants, muſt ſtand confounded at this puzzling query, 'Why are this people wretched?' In ſolving this query, he

he will readily acquit the bountiful hand of kind nature, and conſider the country as the conqueſt of ſome hungry, and cruel nation, the avaricious wantonneſs of whoſe oppreſſion, had grown in proportion to the effects of the luxuries, which its ſpoils afforded; yet conſidering the trifling apparency of the number of their oppreſſors, muſt be aſtoniſhed to ſee ſo numerous, and ſenſible a people, ſuffer oppreſſion ſo tamely at the hands of a few individuals, not duly aware that every inhabitant, had a leech of ſome ſpecies faſtened upon him, which ſucked away not only the blood, but the vital juices alſo.

In thoſe ariſtocratic days, the induſtrious huſbandman, was not to enjoy the fruits of his honeſt labours; the inſatiable wants of a deſpotic government, gaped for a large ſhare of his golden harveſt. The refined modes of ariſtocratic aſſiduity, were ingeniouſly adapted to collect another ſhare, with all the aggravations of inſolence. Another ſhare fell to ſacerdotal drones of all degrees, from the haughty prelate, to his pampered eminence, the cardinal. The herbs of the field, and

what was ever deemed refuſe to the human appetite, were deemed good enough for peaſants; their nutrition ſupported corporeal ſtrength to a certain degree, from which reſiſtance was not to be feared. To touch the fatted calf, lamb, or capon, amounted to ſomething like ſacrilege in him—his betters were ready for dinner:—his rich vineyard was barren to him—his charitable eminence wanted more wine than he could waſte himſelf, to diſtribute among thoſe poor people, who, he was aſſured could return the favour with intereſt. Water was deemed a wholeſome allayer of a peaſant's thirſt—father Adam uſed no other, and he was a fair, and robuſt man:—the holy ſaints, and fathers of the church, deemed it abomination; why then ſhould an ill-inſtructed peaſant, be ſo impious, as to long for ſuch abomination? If any extraordinary effort of induſtry afforded him a new garment, it was ſure to attract ſome freſh inſult, from inſolence on the one ſide, or ſome keen perſecution, from the avaricious eyes on the other. Induſtry, as an unavailing principle, languiſhed, and relaxed away to the deſponding ſtate of ſlothful negligence. The gall, which makes oppreſſion

bitter

bitter, was fretted from him, as uſeleſs even in reflection. So habitual was the poignance of injuries to him, as to become elemental; and ſo degraded in his own eyes, that he did not think himſelf entitled to the blame, or credit, due to his own actions. Miſery, ſabots, and the ſervile obedience of a broken ſpirit, were all the inheritance, he held by entail from his forefathers—all that he could with ſafety hold—and all that he could bequeath to his wretched race.

This charming country, became barren, as Ruſſian deſarts, to the body of its natives. Neceſſity, was the only bleſſing they derived from the old government, and no people under the ſun, became better acquainted with its virtues. Neceſſity inſtructed them in the art of cookery, and its conciliating philoſophy ſupplied the place of digeſtion for the refuſe they had cooked. But little did government then dream that it would alſo inſtruct them in matters that ſo nearly concerned its own exiſtence. Their food, dreſs, and principles, afforded proverbial terms of unkind taunt, and ridicule, to nations leſs deſigned by nature, for the enjoyment of her favours. The unre-

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lenting nightmare of theocracy (and compeers) had practiſed its infernal ſorceries ſo ſucceſsfully upon the human functions, as to transform a generous, brave, and robuſt people, to that lamentable deſcription, which compariſon, places in a view, diametrically oppoſite in contraſt. Should France, ever get rid of thoſe divine placemen, who ſacrilegiouſly perſecute the ſacred ſpirit of religion, under the cover of its own polluted livery; I fear the people would not put on the gloomy weeds of ſorrow, even through the hypocritical condeſcenſion which joy too often pays to the claims of cuſtom.

To turn our eyes from this wretched ſcene, to the court, we might ſee a ſwarm of priſmatic ſhadows, or forms, whoſe nature it was to glitter with gaudy colours, in the ſunſhine of a royal ſmile, and vaniſh in the gloom of a frown; a farcical airy group—mere enigmas of entity—ſuch as fancy preſents to us in the mummery ſcenes, of a diſtempered dream, inceſſantly mocking each other, in the graceful antics, of nods, bows, faſcinating ſmiles, and curteſies. To ſpeak of thoſe ſplendid trifles, as poſſeſſing any thing, like a legiſlative

capacity

capacity, would be a cruel libel upon the very term—a groſs abuſe of words, in the wanton waſte of them upon beings, deſigned for other purpoſes. Carefully trained up to the delicate ſtile of good manners, they modeſtly thought themſelves unworthy of enjoying any ſuch rights, and would not be ſo rude as to hazard a charge of impertinence in the claim. Contented with being in other reſpects rendered inviolably ſacred, as devotees to the potent patron of their order, of which their ſtars were the deſcriptive badges, anſwering the triple purpoſe of ornament, protection, and a vade mecum, that kept the end and nature of their duty perpetually in view, which merely conſiſted in paying daily adoration to the ambitious vanity of their earthly creator, though often doomed (and that knowingly too) to fawn upon thoſe aſkew ſmiles of ſcorn, which a ſenſible man, ſometimes unguardedly betrays, while inwardly ruminating on the cauſe of thoſe neceſſities, which gave diplomatic exiſtence to ſuch beings; they however found ſome comfortable reſources, in the viſiting petty tyrants, who paid in the ſervile ceremonies they had exacted from their inferiors, and received as prime coſt, the affected courteſies

teſies of an inſolent condeſcenſion. No ſymptom of honour was to be diſcovered in them, unleſs the promptneſs to reſentment that appeared in them, on the mere mention of that word, be deemed one. If they promiſed a man good, the illuſions vaniſhed in the teſt, and he found himſelf duped by the mockery of ſhadows; but if they promiſed a man harm, the effects of a moſt ſubtle, and implacable vengeance, impreſſed in him a belief of the exiſtence of malignant beings, compoſed of thoſe vices, that give us the idea of fiends. I could not imagine how any perſon, reaſoning above the ultimacy of ideotiſm, could infer an opinion of the exiſtence of a juſt, and regular ſyſtem of government, from the ſyſtematical order, minute regularities, formal, and ceremonial arrangements, which, in idolizing the moſt groſs abſurdities, are found neceſſary to give importance, to the pompous raree-ſhew of ſtate, and ſtrength to the impotent nature of deſpotiſm; nor how ſo paltry a policy, could give ſo long an exiſtence to a ſpecies of government, that was not founded upon a ſingle principle of equity. But the people were ſo compleatly cruſhed into paſſive

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miſſion, that I deſpaired of their being ever enabled to recover that equilibrium, which philoſophers promiſe to all oppreſſed bodies. As no change could be for the worſe, I moſt devoutly wiſhed for ſome change; even the deſpotiſm of licentiouſneſs appeared comparatively tolerable, becauſe the unſyſtematical violence of its fury, was ever conſidered of a ſhort-lived nature.

While meditating thus far upon the affecting ſtate of my country, and endeavouring to ſmother the turbulent paſſions of grief, indignation, and reſentment, as unavailing paſſions; I joyfully underſtood, that liberty had hoiſted her glorious banners in the weſtern regions, calling for the aſſiſtance of thoſe, who ſhould dare to avow themſelves her ſons: ſomething divinely prophetic ſeemed to whiſper in the call, and I embraced the opportunity of repairing to her ſacred ſtandard.

When I arrived in America, I expected to find a people oppreſſed to that ſtate of deſpair which points to deſperation. My curioſity wandered about to find thoſe two claſſes which

chiefly compoſed the old country, but could not find them : the low neceſſitous claſs, and the gorgeous of enormous fortunes, were unknown there; their loweſt claſs ſeemed to live well, and bore an unaffected appearance of decency and independence, and the moſt wealthy did not pretend to more. Pomp, and oſtentatious ſhow, though pardonable in a ſtranger, were looked upon with an eye of ridicule, and diſguſt, in an inhabitant. In ſhort, I could not at a groſs view, diſcover any material diſtinction in them, that might enable me to conſider them otherwiſe than as one claſs of decent, ſenſible, and induſtrious people, who flouriſhed in their induſtry, even beyond their expectations under the benign influence of a divine conſtitution.

If on a journey of pleaſure, or buſineſs, I happened to need ſome refreſhment, and made up to a country cottage, to ſhare, as I imagined, its coarſe and ſcanty fare, I always found myſelf very agreeably deceived at my entrance, for inſtead of the wretchedneſs of condition, and miſery of aſpect, ſo familiar to me in ſuch ſituations in France, I found that ſprightly, cheerful,

cheerful, and buſy appearance in the family, which beſpoke peace and plenty, and never miſſed being regaled to my hearts content, with all the varieties the country afforded, if I had ſo wiſhed, and in a ſtile too, not inferior to that of the better ſort of tradeſmen in Paris; ſuperabundance with them ſeemed to court the ſolicitations of neceſſity, though even in the rapacious ſhape of a church dignitary. Unaccuſtomed to the pride of ſuperiors, their diſcourſe and manners, diſplayed that graceful eaſe, and unreſerved familiarity, which engages our affections, and places the native ſpontaneity of nature beyond the reach of the imitative efforts of art. What they ſowed, they reaped, without diminution; no demands to anſwer but thoſe of the family; they had no opportunity of proving that they poſſeſſed ſuch a virtue as charity, becauſe poverty was unknown with them.

The bleſſings of the Britiſh conſtitution, (that effluent ſpark of divine wiſdom) moſt amply realized the poetical idea of the golden age in the grateful ſoil. The liberty of the ſubject was unbounded, provided he did not en-

croach upon that of his neighbour. 'Do unto others as thou wouldſt be done by,' was all the law they knew; their words and actions, though free to range with their thoughts, were never abuſed in any wanton expanſions to licentiouſneſs, but maintained the inoffenſive moderation of a mild ſummer zephyr, which meekly glides over the pacific ſurface of a boundleſs ocean, ſhewing a leſs diſpoſition to wander, than when confined within the rigid channel of a narrow ſtreight.

No people in the world were better informed in the principles of religion, yet I neither ſaw biſhop, archbiſhop, cardinal, nor other uſeleſs ſupernumeries of the order, to compliment upon ſo happy an occaſion. The whole face of the country bore the ſacred appearance of ſabbath, on the ſabbath-day, and ſeemed to receive new bleſſings each ſabbath from the approbation of the Great Creator.

That country boaſts not a nobler ſoil than France. Why then are that people happy and this wretched? Why does that country appear to be the happy region of the bleſt, and this

this the hell wherein the higher order of fiends are perpetually tormenting the lower. Let intereſted caſuiſts account for this to the honour of government. It will do their talents in logic much credit: the truth of the premiſes being undeniable.

I could not however account for ſo moderate a people as the Americans, taking up arms againſt the mother country, until I found that the miniſtry at home were conſidered as well in England as in America, to harbour ſtrong intentions of totally overthrowing the conſtitution, and their proceedings were ſo darkingly flagrant, and undiſguiſed, as to leave no room to doubt ſuch intentions in them; and though the Americans took up arms very juſtly in defence of the conſtitution, yet they oppoſed the mother country with the reluctance of a dutiful ſon, who through a principle of ſelf defence, reſiſts the violence of an affectionate mother, who in a moment of inſanity, endeavours to deſtroy the chief object of her affection.

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The miniſters interpreted this reluctance very readily into cowardice; put on the terrific countenance of blood and thunder, and beat them out of more loyalty than ever themſelves poſſeſſed.

On acquainting myſelf more circumſtantially with the origin of this war, I found, that inſolence had as great a ſhare as avarice in it. After the repeal of the ſtamp act in 1765, the miniſters were upon the perpetual bicker with that country, playing the part of a ſtout bully, who on all occaſions, picks quarrels with, and pours inſults upon, the man whom he is reſolved to honour with a ſound drubbing; and in the year 1768, it was propoſed that America ſhould receive biſhops. The ſight of a mermaid was never a more terrific omen of a tempeſt to ſailors, than the name of a biſhop to the Americans.

Hiſtory informed them, that when deſpotiſm had any barbarous and bloody project in agitation, the pious and humane offices of a biſhop were deemed indiſpenſibly neceſſary to give it effectual execution. They ſaw no uſe

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for ſuch a deſcription of beings, but conſidered them a heavy curſe upon every country that harboured them; for if a country afforded villainy enough to make but a figure of deſpotiſm, thoſe declineables became the promothean conductors, which ſacriligiouſly conveyed fire from the ſouls of mankind, to give animation to the curſed automaton. In fact, that in deſpotic countries, they poſſeſſed the ultimate ſubſtance of power, for if a virtuous prince ſhould feel a pious deſire of reſtoring to his ſubjects ſome little portion of their rights, he then perceived a ſuperior power, and dreaded the effects of its reſentment in the poiſoned bowl, or treacherous dagger. America therefore begged that England would be ſo good as to keep her biſhops at home; becauſe Europe afforded ſufficient proofs of how far religion was hated for the teacher's ſake, and it did not wiſh to ſee its virtuous and pious inhabitants relax into the vicious apathy of atheiſm and ſenſuality.

Religion, as uſual, became the ſubject of the prelude to the horrid tragedy; the Europeans ridiculed the Americans as ſanctified

zealots

zealots over burthened with religion, and yet they would ſend them biſhops. The Americans contended, that as religion was ſo precious, as a ſcarce commodity in Europe, coſt ſuch enormous ſums of money, and was ſo profitable an article of traffic as to enrich the chief dealers, whoſe thrifty rule was, weigh and pay, nice weight; that the biſhops ſhould ſtay at home, for if they were good, the country could not have too much of a good thing. It was alſo intimated, that in regulating the church, England might liquidate the national debt in twenty-nine years, with the aſſiſtance of government ſavings, without injuring religion, piety, or morality, in the people. But perhaps no miniſter would be found hardy enough to encounter the omnipotency of the church. Theſe little bickerings revived the animoſity between whig and tory, which formerly made ſuch noiſe in the political world; the fuel of diſcord was kindled, and flamed with doubtful violence in the favourite city of New York. The tories * plainly ſaw that the complete conqueſt of the country was the fa-

* The word tory, with the Americans, ſignifies ariſtocrat, and the word whig, a democrat.

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vourite object of the miniſtry, and conſidering the conqueſt as a matter of courſe, foreſaw thouſands of vacant places and livings, emerging from the arrangements which would probably take place in the new ſyſtem, the firſt choice of which would naturally devolve upon the moſt loyal, and ſo on in rotation, according to their degrees in loyalty; they foreſaw all the objects of their wiſhes rapidly approaching through the yielding regions of an enraptured imagination. But alas! the cunningeſt people generally make the worſt prophets: they however ſtruggled, and vied with each other, in diſplaying their loyalty, as though contending for ſome precious prize; each individual ſeemed to torture his invention in diſcovering ſome new mode of rendering his loyalty conſpicuous in the eyes of government, and in conſequence of ſuch machinations, party mobs met and fought daily in the ſtreets. No lawyers, was the motto of the tories, and no biſhops, that of the whigs. In the great mob fight of 1769, the tories, ſtrengthened by diſguiſed ſoldiers and men of * warſmen, entirely routed the whigs,

* The crew of the Huzzar man of war, wintering at Cromeline's wharf, were all in this fray.

and the general election crowned their triumph. The vanquiſhed whigs, became more endeared to each other than ever. Diſgrace ſerved as a cement in mutualizing their intereſts in one common bond; their reſentment burned with the latent violence of ſubterraneous fires, and committees of correſpondence were eſtabliſhed throughout the country. Such were the Tiny ſymptoms of the great events that enſued.

On the other hand, the victors diſplayed all the inſolence of exultation that generally attends great victories! they magnified their triumph in thoſe ſchool-boy quarrels to an extravagant degree of importance. In their letters to the miniſtry, they repreſented themſelves as the moſt powerful and numerous part of the people; they intimated that the country was all ſubmiſſion,—quite prepared by them to receive the yoke and chain, and that a ſmall pocket full of troops were almoſt more than ſufficient to keep it ſo. Perhaps in future days it will not be believed, that any ſet of miniſters could be ſo weak as to be duped by ſuch childiſh

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and paltry ſtuff; yet it is a notorious fact, that they ſwallowed all very kindly.

They muſt certainly have been totally ignorant of the hiſtory of mankind, in ſuffering themſelves to be ſo groſsly impoſed upon: the conſequence may, however, afford all future miniſters the benefit of an excellent document, in exerciſing the moſt cool, circumſpect and wary, prudence, when tempted to unfair projects, by the overweening loyalty of deſigning ariſtocrats. Theſe circumſtances are very little, if at all known in Europe. Hiſtorians, perhaps totally ignorant of them, or diſdaining to condeſcend ſo far as to notice ſuch trifles, have totally omitted them. To weak miniſters, who view matters abſtractedly, they indeed may be uſeleſs, but to wiſe men, who are capable of making ingenious inferences, and of refining them to the moſt remote merits of their purpoſe, they will ever be found exceedingly uſeful. The moſt eminent phyſicians, are thoſe who moſt acquaint themſelves with the moſt minute ſymptoms of a diſeaſe.

The miniſtry, out of a variety of projects, adopted the tea act, for the purpoſe of putting American loyalty to the teſt. Inſtead of ſpeaking of the glaring abſurdity, and injuſtice of this act, I ſhall admit it as founded upon a juſt claim, yet ſtill the intention was as criminal, as the mode of introducing it was inſolent, becauſe they did not trouble themſelves to produce any authority from law, conſtitution, or common ſenſe, to juſtify them; they merely ſaid, they had a right, and that they would prove it. But how? Why, by the ſword. The cauſe might be perfectly juſt; but the inſolent appeal made it cruelly unjuſt. If it was juſt, they acted right upon a wrong principle, and incurred the criminality of an intrigueing debauchee, who ſins in the embrace of his lawful wife, while he fancies himſelf debauching the wife of his neighbour.

The Americans petitioned and remonſtrated, but their petitions and remonſtrances were contemptuouſly thrown under the table. At length, they reluctantly, appealed alſo to the ſword, as their laſt reſource. Hoſtilities were com-

commenced; a national army was raiſed; and Colonel Waſhington was appointed commander in chief, a ſituation which the genius of the country ſeems to have deſigned for him at his birth; the people rejoiced at this choice, and placed a moſt hearty and unreſerved confidence in his integrity; and notwithſtanding the many difficulties, embarraſſments, and diſagreeable jealouſies, that naturally attended his ſituation during that war, yet, in the end, he amply proved himſelf worthy of the confidence repoſed in him. There was a mild ſerenity in his deportment and manner, that would give dignity even to a rebel; and ſo ſlow and moderate was he in his reſentments, that he appeared to have routed the paſſion from his nature, as a blemiſh which degraded the dignity of that degree of excellence, which links the Divine nature to the human in the univerſal chain. He had an irreſiſtable propenſity to juſtice, and ſo inflexible was his attachment to that divine attribute, that in all his actions, whether public or private, the leading feature readily diſcovered the ſource from which they ſprung. No ſymptom could warrant a ſuppoſition that he had pauſed in any negociation with

with intereſt, or paſſion, when juſtice was not in view. If he had faults, he muſt have been ſenſible of them, and was very ſucceſsful in concealing them from the world. No character among the antients was ſo much admired by him as that of Ariſtides, and no man ever adopted his political, and private principles more correctly, except that he had obſerved the dictates of juſtice a degree further, in not wronging himſelf, by injuring his perſonal property; he was not philoſopher enough to loſe ſight of the difference between wealth and poverty. I would not have my meaning perverted into a charge of parſimony. His generoſity, as commander in chief, and as preſideht, will obviate any ſuch idea. His eſtate he conſidered as a matter of truſt delivered into his hands, which he was in juſtice bound to tranſmit to his heirs without deminution; and he did not diſcover a wiſh to increaſe it. His œconomy was neither tinctured with meanneſs nor waſte; he was generous, but not to a fault; and when merit of any ſort preſented itſelf, his purſe, patronage, and friendſhip, were as prompt as his approbation, and if preferment was the wiſh, the claims

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even of conſanguinity muſt give way. As an officer, he aſſumed a pride not natural to him. It was neceſſary in a looſe army to ſupply the want of that rigid authority, which gives a ſettled perfection to diſcipline. In his retirement, he choſe rather to aſſume the active and independent citizen, than what people of common notions may raſhly call an ambitious oſtentation of poverty, which may be looked upon as a perpetual memento to the gratitude of his country. To judge the merits of this difference in the characters of thoſe illuſtrious perſonages, would be cenſurably preſumptious in any man who did not poſſeſs the divine greatneſs of ſoul, and elevated genius of Ariſtides,—and alſo the talent of correcting the ideas to that degree of propriety, which diſtinguiſhed his ſentiments, and actions, from thoſe of his cotemporaries. Waſhington might conſider wealth as a great bleſſing in the hands of a good man, becauſe it enabled him to indulge a kind and generous propenſity in relieving the cravings of corporeal neceſſities. Ariſtides perhaps forming a more juſt idea of the ends we are deſigned to anſwer in this ſhort life, might think

it brutiſh in man to devote the noble faculties of the mind, intirely to the gratification of thoſe appetites and paſſions, which brutes poſſeſs in common with him, and ſtrove by example and precept, to exalt the human mind, to a ſenſe of its own inherent dignity, in temporizing with the condition of our fate in this life, and aſcertaining the degree of its fortitude, by the degree of poverty allotted to us for the benefit of the experiment.

Thus far we may claim the liberty of conjecturing the difference in the motives of thoſe great men, but on judging by any mode ſo fallible as conjecture, we may be liable to err as widely, as when we view the different paralaxes of two bright ſtars, in the incompetency of our ideas, and then raſhly judge which moſt inclines upwards towards heaven, or downwards towards the earth. Therefore to avoid any charge of vanity, we may conclude more characteriſtically, and perhaps more juſtly, by ſuppoſing that both differently circumſtanced, have adopted different modes of adhering to the principles of juſtice. Ariſtides born poor, might have imagined, that an accumulation

lation of wealth, muſt unavoidably derive ſome tincture from injuſtice; and Waſhington born wealthy, might deem it injuſtice to die poor. Waſhington differed very widely from the cotemporaries of Ariſtides, in their character of him; he conſidered him to be what an unlimited monarch, would call a republican, and what a republican would call an ariſtocrat. Never more ready to confront and reſiſt the tyranny of an abſolute monarch at the peril of his life, than the deſpotiſm of that licentiouſneſs, into which republicaniſm is ſo prone to relax. Conſidering genuine liberty to exiſt only in the happy medium between the two extremes.

In a group of allegorical figures in a painting, no figure could be more aptly placed to repreſent the genius of the Engliſh Conſtitution, than that of Ariſtides. The antients looked upon Themiſtocles as a great patriot. Waſhington deſpiſed him in conſidering him to be the very reverſe. All the ſymptoms of a tyrant appeared very conſpicuouſly in his principles and actions; avarice and pecula-

tion were too moderately conſidered as mere foibles in him. But theſe vices generally proceed from that ſpecies of dangerous vileneſs in the heart, which needs only the rod of abſolute power to blaſt the happineſs of mankind. He never conſidered to what degree his reſentment would operate, provided it was not to any good to the object. The deſpotiſm, which too often annexes itſelf to the executive power, was too far beyond his hope to aim at; but a deſpot he would be, and therefore on all occaſions exerted his power in indulging the licentiouſneſs of the populace, and encouraging its capricious wantonneſs by mean and unmanly flexibilities. Through ſuch little paltry artifices, he became the darling repreſentative of the mob, and in the height of its moſt tempeſtuous fury, he could mount the monſter, guide it in the giddy whirlwind of confuſion, and pour all its vengeance on the devoted objects of his reſentment.

Waſhington could not ſee any material difference between the deſpotiſm of an abſolute monarchy

monarchy and that of licentiouſneſs. In both ſpecies reaſon and juſtice, are trampled under foot; and the life and property of the ſubject, unprotected by any law, lie open to become the prey of the robber and aſſaſſin. In Waſhington's conduct during the American war, we may eaſily ſee how far his actions were governed by his principles, and the happy concluſion proved their merits. America, in proportion to its population, from the boundaries of Connecticut to the extreme boundaries of Georgia, was curſed with perhaps more ariſtocrats than even France; 5700 were in the Britiſh ſervice, and thoſe who could not reach the Britiſh lines, or who choſe to ſtand and keep their habitations, were ſo numerous, ſo audacious, and ſo powerful in their influence, that congreſs was at a loſs in the manner of proceeding againſt them. At length the due penalties for treaſonable offences were paſſed into law. The country people, who were called forth from their happy habitations to endure the hardſhips of war, were highly incenſed againſt the tories as the guilty cauſe, and the Europeans in the American ſervice,

were outrageous in their efforts to deſtroy them. Waſhington, perceiving licentiouſneſs peering up from the rank ſlime of the vulgar ooze, and begin to organize its monſtrous head, interfered with the utmoſt exertion of his power, and cruſhed the monſter in its embryo ſtate; he choſe rather to ſuffer the inconveniencies of an extraordinary vigilance, precaution, and ſecreſy than ſuffer inteſtine carnage, in which diſcrimination muſt ſoon be loſt, and the innocent be confounded with the guilty, through miſtake, or the wantonneſs of perſonal reſentment; and though in this act, he acquired the common appellation of the tory general (a name which would inevitably have proved fatal to him in France), yet ſo inflexible was he in his meaſures, that he iſſued orders to the commanders of the militia in all the townſhips under his juriſdiction, to reſcue ſuch individuals as were likely to fall a ſacrifice to the vengeance of the populace, and to keep them in their protection, and cuſtody, until they had a fair and impartial trial according to the law of the country; he alſo gave ample encouragement to all

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proſecutors, evidences, and informers in ſuch caſes. This mode of proceeding gave the tories an idea of an eſtabliſhed efficiency in the law, and they began to pay due attention to the regular form and authority of the government. The juſtice with which the laws were adminiſtered made them conſcious of guilt, when they offended againſt them.—In their words and actions they grew very cautious, generally providing themſelves with ſome ſubterfuge. In ſhort, toryiſm melted away inſenſibly, and in a much ſhorter time, than by the violence of a lawleſs perſecution. So ſpirited was the perſeverance of government, in maintaining good order, that not one drop of innocent blood, has been ſhed during that revolution. Hear this, oh France!—Not one drop of innocent blood has been ſhed during the whole of that glorious revolution!—So pleaſing muſt the juſtice, and moderation of that people appear in the eyes of the Supreme Being, that I have no doubt but his bleſſing will perpetuate the exiſtence of their republic, to the moſt remote period, that ſuch a form of government can naturally arrive at.

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This revolution happily compleated, I returned to France, whoſe wretchedneſs appeared now highly aggravated in a comparative view with the happy ſituation of the people of America. So ſtrong was the impreſſion I conceived, from the reflections this ſubject naturally afforded, that for a long time the moſt of my enjoyments loſt ſome portion of their reliſh with me; and when the paſſions are agitated, the underſtanding finds little reſt until they are gratified.

In ruminating upon the principles of a conſtitution which afforded ſo much happineſs to the ſubject, the Britiſh government appeared to me to be a republic, and the only perfect one that ever exiſted. The general idea of the meaning of the word republic, is, a pure popular government, without any mixture of monarchy, or ariſtocracy. Such was the mode deſigned to produce liberty, and conſequently the happineſs of mankind; but wanting the due, and neceſſary ingredients, has ever failed, and ever will fail, in producing the end propoſed. The goodneſs of the intention admitted, the means are imperfect, and

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of courſe cannot operate effectually. But it has been amply proved by the moſt unqueſtionable experience, that a happy mixture of monarchy, and of ariſtocracy, will make the means, perfectly equal to the original deſign; and ſuch is the compoſition, which, in my opinion, ought to be conſidered as that perfect, permanent, and efficient republic, which has the power, and yet cannot withhold it, in making the ſubject free and happy. Monarchy is that political ſubſtratum of accidents, that ſubſtance which unites an infinite number of parts, and gives them ſo juſt a degree of ſelf-conſiſtency in the commutuality of attachment, as to acquire the dignity of one perfect, firm, and inſeparable body, no longer prone to jar, ſeparate, and entertain difference in intereſt. The office of ariſtocracy is to correct the correſpondence of the people with their ſovereign. Theſe two conſtituent parts are as neceſſary as the people, to give me the idea of a republic.

In the early ages of the world, pure flour, (without any mixture) however liable to decay in its own rankneſs, might have produced the idea

idea of bread, in thoſe unexperienced people; but in the people of theſe days it will not. Arts and ſciences have received a very evident degree of cultivation, and perfection, in the œconomy of human affairs, and we now conſider fire, and water, as neceſſary as flour, to produce the idea of bread in us.

The Britiſh conſtitution appears to be the work of ſome wiſe, and diſintereſted being, whoſe ambition ſeems to have ſolely aimed at producing a maſter-piece in point of excellence in the ſtructure, and ſeems to have founded his ſyſtem upon his idea of the principle by which the Allwiſe, governs the univerſe and all that it comprehends. No one body is oppreſſed, or controuled by another in its own proper ſphere; therein it performs its due revolution, with all the freedom, and independence of a ſovereign. All are placed upon a ſcale of equality in point of right, which naturally varies in claim, through the comparative merits, of an infinite variety of qualities and properties wiſely diſtributed among bodies, not only to give each a degree of peculiarity in cognizable diſtinction, but alſo that the infinite

infinite variety of their excellencies ſhould mutually operate to produce the utmoſt degree of perfection in the œconomy of the whole.

The cottage of the pooreſt peaſant in England, is his kingdom, and therein he is as much a king, as the king is in his palace. The ſtar upon the breaſt of the peer, and the badge upon the porters, are undiſtinguiſhable to him, when he contends for his right, and in the trial of its merits, not only the nobleſt peer, but his ſovereign, is ſuppoſed to be brought down and pitted foot to foot on even ground, while juſtice, blind to any diſtinction, inclines the balance, to where the greateſt portion of right preponderates. In ſupporting government, all ſubjects contribute equally in proportion to their cognizable means.

If a republican ſighs for equality, here is equality in its utmoſt perfection. If he wiſhes that every ſubject ſhould be a king, why here, is an entire iſland of kings, whoſe law, he may call the law of nations, if he pleaſes. To ſay that Britain has no Conſtitution, is a ſpecies of political atheiſm, that readily admits effects, but obſtinately denies a cauſe. It is inſulting our faculties, in endeavouring to prove a fal-

lacy in the teſtimony of our ſenſes, and convince us that we ſhould enjoy the happineſs (we at leaſt imagine) we poſſeſs in a grievous and painful ſenſe; becauſe it is inſiſted, that we are led to it by a mere illuſion—an optician's roſe of ſharum—a charming appearance in the air, which delights the eye, eludes the touch, and exiſts only in the imagination.

Yet I fancy it will be admitted, that the law, which has the power to protect the life, and property of the ſubject, and to puniſh offenders, muſt derive that power from ſome Conſtitution; and whether that Conſtitution be good or bad, can be proved no other way, than by the idea, which the judgment derives from the mode of its operation.

It has been ſaid, that the Britiſh Conſtitution was engendered in Norman abſurdities, but we are not told what the generating power was. Such an information would militate againſt the credit of the aſſertion, becauſe it would be found that the Conſtitution was the generating power, and not the generated. What is called the Conſtitution of France, and its laws, were alſo engendered in abſurdities, otherwiſe we ſhould conſider them as abſurd, and wantonly impertinent. Where

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no abſurdity exiſts, the Conſtitution may keep holiday; becauſe laws are uſeleſs when grievances are not known. The charming order and harmony of the univerſe, were engendered in the abſurdities of a rude and undigeſted chaos; and the nobleſt laws exiſting, muſt owe their exiſtence to the ſtimulation of abſurdities: no matter whether they be Saxon, or Norman. The above aſſertion, however, is well calculated to make the body of a people diſcontented, and unhappy without juſt cauſe.—If we tell a child who pricks his finger, that he will die after it, he will immediately fall a crying with grief, imagining we mean that he will die in conſequence of it. But if I miſtake not, the Engliſh conſider their magna charta as the Engliſh root of their Conſtitution, or rather of its liberty. It is true, it lay a long time buried in the earth, with little or no ſign of its vegetation, until the perpetual operation of juriſprudence, like that of a kind climate, had inſinuated itſelf through the groſs pores of the Gothic glebe, cheered up its languid ſpirit, and cheriſhed its growth ſo ſucceſsfully with its foſtering care, that it produced a tree, whoſe fruit gives life to all thoſe who taſte thereof; that is to ſay, furniſhes life with thoſe

honourable conditions, without which a man of ſpirit would ſcorn to accept it. Some particles of the feudal mould ſtill adhere to the ſtock, and branches, which the common law will inſenſibly purge away in the courſe of time.

In this light, the profeſſors of the common law, are a great bleſſing to every country; they are guardians to a good Conſtitution; and if a bad one affords but one good ſpark, they will not fail to improve it to the utmoſt advantage. I have no doubt but they alſo anſwer a good end in the line of morality.—Litigiouſneſs has ever been admitted a ſtrong ſymptom of the vice of avarice in the mind of man, and when the lawyer diſcovers this ſymptom, he finds an intereſt in encouraging it, and by ſome clue finds means to drag forth the ſecret vice into public action, and the chaſtiſement it generally receives, reduces it by ſad experience, to habits of ſocial moderation, when church precepts, and injunctions fail.

The corrupt and unfair manner of electing members of parliament, is certainly very injurious to the Conſtitution in the free exer-

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ciſes of its purpoſes, and may be ſaid to be intruded upon it by the inſolent authority of a modern cuſtom, for the purpoſe of giving due weight, and ſupport, to the miniſter. But this mode ſtill keeps the gate open to peculation of every ſort. Unneceſſary wars are the frequent conſequences, and the natural conſequences of a war, are loans, taxes, places, and penſions, which produce only poverty, and diſtreſs to the ſubject; and it is of little conſequence to a ſubject, whether his liberty be circumſcribed within narrow bounds, by poverty or edict. The law permits us the freedom of walking abroad; but if we have not the means of making a proper appearance, our habitations become our priſons.

Under ſo excellent a government as that of England, any internal commotion muſt derive its ſource from the poverty and diſtreſſes of the people, and nothing but a groſs abuſe of the Conſtitution can make them wretched. Why ſhould England, or France, contract a national debt? The revenues of nineteen, and twenty-nine millions, are more than neceſſary to carry on a perpetual war; and if people may judge by the monies levied, they have a right to conſider themſelves as engaged in a perpetual war.

war. In time of war it is neceſſary to make the due levies; but in time of peace, let the ſubject reſt from the preſſure of taxes.

A gentleman of twenty thouſand a year, may be engaged in a law-ſuit, which may coſt him fourteen. Such a man is not by this expenditure reduced to the neceſſity of mortgaging his whole eſtate. But if he ſhould mortgage it, he may certainly propoſe a plauſible excuſe. Yet, notwithſtanding, if matters are properly enquired into, it will be found that there is ſome waſte leak in the veſſel, which needs the attention of a board of œconomy. A reformation of ſome abuſes would come very kindly from the hands of the miniſter. But I cannot ſee how he can undertake an entire reformation in the mode of election; to eradicate ſo deeply rooted an evil, requires a greater degree of wiſdom, virtue, and ſcientific knowledge, than we are at firſt aware of, and a greater length of time than our impatience would eaſily allow: every ſtep is big with the fate of the Conſtitution. New conſequences are perpetually riſing in proſpect at every progreſſive advance; he muſt reſt at every ſtep, until he makes himſelf perfectly well acquainted with its va-

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rious tendencies; and how far he may be liable to be governed by the nature of thoſe tendencies, muſt at that criſis be a matter of mere ſpeculation. We muſt firſt premiſe an efficiency in the laws indiſpenſibly neceſſary; the executive branch poſſeſſes no more power than is neceſſary to that purpoſe, and if it is deprived of a portion of this power, the want muſt be ſupplied from ſome conſtitutional reſource; and I am apt to think this taſk will grow ſomewhat arduous in the courſe of his progreſs.

A man may form a mode of government in one day, that may laſt for one day; but a great deal of harm might reſult from ſuch dangerous trifling. The generous patriot, actuated more by virtue than by prudence, ſhall in the glow of a juſt indignation, lay the crane to this evil, and with an honeſt raſhneſs, tear it up altogether by the roots at once. We ſhall alſo ſuppoſe him to ſucceed ſo far in his plan, that every ſubject in the kingdom ſhall be fairly, and juſtly repreſented in parliament; let us then ſee how matters will ſtand: one mode of giving efficiency to government is done away, and no other ſubſtituted. The miniſter of this day muſt give way to another,

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and the miniſter of to-morrow will ſee another take his ſeat on the next day, and ſo on. The new miniſter overturns the labour of the old. Reſponſibility lies no where, and government becomes a ridiculous whirligigg, the ſport of triflers, whipped about by commotions, and kept in perpetual motion without ever being able to make any progreſſive advances for the benefit of the ſtate; the labour of a century is overturned in the whim of an experiment, and the government dwindles into what is called republicaniſm—but what I call mobiſm.

Even this mode of government, in a little time, worried and wearied with the fatigue of its own ineffectual buſtle, and ſenſeleſs wantonneſs, digeſts itſelf tamely into an aukward ſyſtem, like that of other European republics, wherein the executive branch uſurps a greater ſhare of power than the Britiſh Conſtitution would ſuffer. I cannot however, by the bye, avoid lamenting the contemptible and diſgraceful appearance, which human nature makes in the preſence of our conſcience, when we conſider the conduct of ſome people in the Houſe of C————. Nature then appears ſo groſs, corrupt, and diſguſtful, a maſs that

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cannot chuſe, but think the mind ſuffering a grievous puniſhment, in being compelled to bear about ſo loathſome a burthen, and muſt think itſelf highly bleſſed, when unloaded of it.

A miniſter ſhall to-day propoſe a meaſure, the abſurdity of which, ſhall appear as glaringly evident as the noon-day ſun, even to the capacity of a ſchool-boy: yet this ſhall be paſſed by a majority, that will make common ſenſe ſtand confounded. The orator's elegant labour is loſt—ſound reaſoning has no weight—and truth carries no conviction with it. Now upon the other hand, let us ſuppoſe that the ſame miniſter, ſhould by way of experiment, oppoſe the ſecond reading of his own motion on the next day, and I have no doubt but it would be thrown under the table. What can ſuch men propoſe to themſelves from ſuch depravity? Bleſt with a competency of food and raiment, what mighty taſk can they mean to perform in two or three dozen Midſummer-days, that they cannot ſhew a little manly independence even in trifles. Conſcience will ſupplant duty and gratitude in the hearts of

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their heirs; a curſe attends their ill-gotten pelf, and their memory will rot with their bones.

I wiſh the miniſter, whoever he may be, would out of mercy to the honour of human nature, be ſo charitable, as to bring ſome plauſibility always with his meaſures, to cover the ſhameful lack-ſhame of ſome people, who ſeem to think it a crime to poſſeſs any virtue that reſembled honour, out of compliment to their idea of the intention, which their duty is bound to ſerve and fulfill. By *****, I would not truſt the life of my faithful dog, either to the oath, honeſty, or integrity, of ſuch men; yet as ſo much danger attends the removal of ſo groſs and obſtinate an evil, I would uſe the policy of an able phyſician. I would endeavour to check the ill effects of a diſeaſe, which I could not with ſafety eradicate, without the aſſiſtance of a great deal of time and experience; and as all meaſures adopted for this purpoſe, are to be looked upon as matters of a temporary nature, I think a board of œconomy, ingeniouſly conſtituted, might ſerve as a good check, in the exchequer,

quer, againſt peculation, and the evil tendencies of an endleſs train of petty abuſes. A correſpondence ſhould be eſtabliſhed between this board and that of finances; and among other powers, it ſhould be inveſted with that of forming, ſuperviſing, and examining the merits of all government contracts.

New miniſters introduce new opinions, new motives, new meaſures.—A large train of friends, and a freſh train of neceſſities, all gaping to be gratified. Under ſuch circumſtances, a powerful and well applied check will be found very neceſſary: it may not only prevent the impoveriſhment of the people, but alſo make war, and other meaſures of the miniſter, matters of principle and neceſſity, rather than intereſt; and alſo convince the ſovereign of a free people, that his true intereſt is inſeperable from the happineſs and wealth of his ſubjects.

It has been ſaid, that a king ſhould be a tyrant from prudence. This haſty expreſſion of this elegant writer, has been ſtrangely miſconceived, and rather too harſhly interpreted

into its literal ſenſe, by people ready to gratify a captious temper, with the comforts that acrimony never fails to afford it. Let us then ſuppoſe, that an honeſt man has the power to reduce that of a king to a moderate degree, yet would he not be highly agitated, and incenſed to ſee that king, become a butt of ridicule, inſolent taunts, and wanton jibes to a rude populace, as we have lately ſeen in Paris. Certainly he would; nay, he would curſe, ſwear, and make uſe of expreſſions in the violence of his paſſion, that would be diſguſtful to his own good ſenſe in his cooler moments. The raſh eccentricities of a rude mob, not only provoke reſentment in a ſenſible man, but are diſguſtful even to itſelf. We are all in our natural and uncultivated ſtate, prone to groſs and vicious actions, that degrade the pre-eminence of our boaſted reaſon, beneath that of the brute, becauſe we employ our reaſon in out-bruting the brute. Our conſcience tells us, that the bulk of our inclinations are prone to brutality, and conſcience never tells an untruth knowingly. We may be affronted, but we muſt allow, that brutiſh actions are the actions of a brute, be the ſpecies deſcribed

ſcribed by the reſemblance they may aſſume. Such certainly is the ſtate of our uncultivated minds, until the divine operation of religion, and of a virtuous education, corrects the groſs abſurdities of our nature, and gives our actions a degree of propriety which will neither rouſe our reſentment, nor put us to the bluſh when they are repreſented to us. This expreſſion ſhould therefore be conſidered as a mere exclamation of paſſion, in which cool judgment could have no concern. To ſay that a king ſhould be a tyrant from prudence, conveys ſo great a ſhare of abſurdity in the literal ſenſe, that no candid man will receive it in that light; the literal meaning of the word tyrant, is a cruel, barbarous, and deſpotic ruler, who obſerves no law, but that of his pleaſure. Such a king muſt be a bad king, and a bad man; and if we conſult the hiſtory of Europe, we will find that ſuch men have generally received their juſt reward. Some have been ſomewhat ſucceſsful in withholding a bleſſing from their ſubjects which they never taſted; but ſad experience has proved a wide difference between the withholding a bleſſing from a ſubject which he had never taſted, and the attempt of robbing him

him of a bleſſing, which he actually enjoys I cannot ſee wherein the ſituation of a bad king can be enviable.—He may extort a temporary ſmile from the countenance, though thirſty vengeance may lie rankling in the heart. He may command plauſible appearances, but he can repoſe no confidence in them; the more honeſt he thinks a man, the more aſſured he is of his being a traitor; he is under the neceſſity of courting the friendſhip of villains, and he finds them villains in the end; his moſt ſecret footſteps are attended with danger; his guards cannot keep away fears, jealouſies, and ſuſpicions, from his ſlumbers; nor the poignancy of guilt that haunts and goads the conſcience; every honeſt ſubject he meets, preſents to him the idea of an executioner. When his ſubjects are thoroughly kindled, and he views the unavoidable ſtorm approaching, ſad is his ſituation, when he cannot recollect a ſingle virtue to afford him ſhelter! Urged forward by his friends, and preſſed forward by his enemies to the dizzying brink of the baſeleſs precipice. Shocking and exemplary muſt his fall appear, when he ſinks into the horrid abyſs of his fate, without the comfort of pity, even from the humane.

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In my opinion, a highly finiſhed tyrant ſhould affect private virtues through a principle of policy. Kind hearted people are naturally fond of making ſuch large allowances, even for a private virtue, that when juſtice draws the ſword, mercy finds ſome pretence to interfere, and diſarm it. But what has a king of England to do with ſuch a diſcourſe? He, in adminiſtering laws founded upon principles of juſtice, becomes vicegerent of the ſupreme being; he is ſacred, and the man ſins in thought, who means harm to him. Heterogeneal diſcord cannot affect him. Under the ſhelter of the Conſtitution he is inviolable, and invincible. The Conſtitution is his well walled troy, wherein he is perfectly ſafe, until he himſelf breaks down its ſacred walls, through the treacherous inſinuation of falſe friendſhip. He needs neither guards nor armies to protect him; he finds a fortreſs in every honeſt ſubject's heart. When he meets a ſubject, he meets a ſincere friend, ready to lay down his life in his defence; therefore, it is my opinion, that a king ſo happily circumſtanced, ſhould from motives of prudence make it his ſtudy to give the utmoſt degree of

firmneſs

firmneſs and perfection to a Conſtitution, upon whoſe ſtability, the immortality of his line depends.

During the American war, and ſome time after, the Pariſians and other citizens, began to diſcuſs the rights of Frenchmen pretty freely, under pretence of vindicating the cauſe of the Americans againſt the oppreſſive meaſures of the Britiſh miniſtry: they began to diſcover a ſpirit in their ſentiments that did them much credit, as a gallant reſolution, hitherto unknown in the trifling chit-chat of of French politicians. The Duke of Orleans having imbibed a ſtrong tincture of Britiſh liberty, countenanced this liberty of ſpeech with a cordial approbation, encouragement, and protection; his power and patronage were great; and the people did not heſitate to avail themſelves of the advantage that ſo fortunately preſented itſelf. The moſt remote parts of France began to liſp complaints of their ſufferings, and the whole nation began to buz murmurs. They thought the compelling of the parliament to regiſter the edicts of the king by force, a very flagrant act of

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injuſtice—the Duke of Orleans thought ſo.—His influence was great in the parliament and in the army, and his principles were propagated with incredible ſucceſs in both. All, conſidering him as the amenable object, began to think, that the extravagancies of their own conduct would be paſſed over with impunity. Intereſt conſpired with the inclination in bringing forth the ſecret ſentiments of the heart, and the attachment which the human mind naturally feels for oppreſſed juſtice blazed forth openly into action.

The deſtruction of the Baſtile was the prelude to the revolution that immediately followed—a revolution which every honeſt man muſt call glorious, had ſome guardian angel attended it in its progreſs to a certain degree, and there fixed it. All degrees of nobility were immediately aboliſhed.—This meaſure was very naturally expected from the reſentment of a people, ſtill ſmarting with the anguiſh of the oppreſſion they had ſuffered. Their oppreſſors practices were too recent in the memory to be forgotten, and too intolerable to be forgiven. So numerous were

thoſe nobles, that the word noble, began to convey an idea of vulgarity in the very ſound. Men whoſe forefathers had acquired their titles by virtuous and glorious actions, were diſguſted and out of humour with their own nobility, when they found themſelves compelled to herd with vile inſtruments they deſpiſed, and who were ennobled and ſerved in as made-up diſhes, merely to anſwer the neceſſity of the moment. I was not at all diſpleaſed at this meaſure, expecting a regeneration upon ſuch good principles as would make the peerage of the kingdom truly illuſtrious.

Their undertaking to regulate the church gave me great ſatisfaction—it wanted it very much, and I was glad to ſee that they were reſolved to do it completely, and thereby reſtore it to the reverence due to it. The government ſtood very much in need of thoſe means by which the church became corrupted, to ſupport the virtue of the people. They very properly applied worldly matters to worldly purpoſes, and what had hitherto been a national grievance, was now become a national

national benefit. Some intereſted people may poſſibly be ſo uncandid as to aſcribe my ſatisfaction on this head to an irreligious principle. Such a charge I deny, with the contempt due to ſo paltry a ſubterfuge. I hold religion ſacred—I would ſacrifice any private intereſt to reſtore it to its native purity, from that noxious corruption which is deteſtable in the eyes of heaven and earth. Religion has been too long perſecuted, oppreſſed, and abuſed by the very miniſters that ſhould protect it; and they have never heſitated to proſtitute it to the vileſt purpoſes, when their intereſt required the impious ſacrifice. The conſcience of every clergyman in France will join with me in this aſſertion, in deſpite of all the palliating ſubtilties and crafty efforts of falſe logic, with which he may endeavour to deceive himſelf for the impious purpoſe of conforming and reconciling his principle to his intereſt.

My purpoſe merely drifts to a defence of truth and religion, a cauſe in which every good man muſt find himſelf intereſted; and I have no manner of doubt but heaven approves the indignation with which thinking

people view their perſecutors; nay, I do not think it extravagant to believe, that the dying groans of religion are heard in heaven, and that a ſingular vengeance will deſcend ſooner or later upon thoſe Pandemonian agents, whoſe treacherous and corrupt practices, tend to rout its divine influence from the human heart. The liberty of mankind is evidently inconſiſtent with the intereſt of thoſe people—their avarice is become a bye-word of diſguſt and ridicule even with the peaſantry. If they poſſeſs any virtue like pity, it is in them a fixture which is not to be moved: they roſe through humility to the ſummit of power, and their cruel exerciſe thereof, drew upon them the juſt (though unavailing) deteſtation of mankind; but if the ſcene ſhould change, and they ſhould chance to fall through any treacherous extravagance of their pride: they doubtleſs will feel the pains of purgatory in the contempt of an injured people; their policy and views amply manifeſted; they will find a ſorry retreat in the whining ſtrains of hypocricy: far be it from me to be ſo uncharitable as to exclude all exception to the generality of the charge.

I feel

I feel great joy in hoping that there exiſt ſome virtuous men, who indulge the noble impulſe of a generous ſoul, in acts of piety, and humanity, forgetting that they are biſhops. Some very ſenſible men have aſſerted, that the decay of every religion may be dated from the moment of its eſtabliſhment by government. But the aſſembly gave the eſtabliſhed religion ſome relief in the toleration act. Several other neceſſary and uſeful reforms took place in organizing the new conſtitution, and ſeveral laws were framed and modes adopted, in which the agitation and jealouſies of the times might be eaſily diſcovered, and which, under other circumſtances, would acquire ſome evil tendencies; but thoſe I overlooked, as temporary matters, which in time would naturally wear away with the remembrance of their cauſes, when tranquillity ſhould be reſtored upon a permanent foundation.

I caſt a longing eye upon the Britiſh conſtitution, and moſt devoutly wiſhed to ſee it adopted, with ſome modifications neceſſary to the continental ſituation of France. This meaſure

meaſure would have ſaved a vaſt deal of trouble, confuſion, and tumult. I ſee no reaſon why a free people, ſhould not adopt a conſtitution which had ſtaunchly maintained a conſiſtency with the liberty of the ſubject, in all the various ordeals of experience. I was, however, well ſatisfied with the conſtitution, as accepted by the king; it appeared to me a good foundation, upon which future experience might build an excellent fabric. At this criſis, when the people were almoſt giddy with politics, Mr. Paine's Anſwer to Mr. Burke made its appearance, and was read with much avidity. When I peruſed this book, I conſidered its political errors, as we generally conſider the literary errors of a friend, mere defects in the judgment, which could have no evil tendency, except in militating againſt the reputation and intereſt of the author. I did not imagine that the people of France could ever ruſh into ſuch mad extravagancies, as to adopt ſo unſtable, and undurable a form of government as that of a republic—a form of government which was ſo evidently inconſiſtent with the nature, extent, and ſituation of the country, and with the natural temper

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of the people. I readily admit, that a republican form of government (however deluſive in its nature) to be the moſt pleaſing and plauſible that can be preſented to the uninformed or unexperienced bulk of mankind. It is a charming illuſion, a Paradiſe in proſpect, which preſents to our paſſions all the delights we can imagine for the ample gratification of all our wiſhes and appetites. But when we imagine ourſelves within reach of thoſe enjoyments, the charming ſorcereſs of republicaniſm, like that in Arioſto, transforms us to what animals ſhe pleaſes, and to our ſad coſt, we find all to be a grievous deluſion in the end.

The hiſtory of Greece, or Rome cannot produce an inſtance to prove a free republic's having outlived the ſhort ſpace of forty years. It might have retained the name with the ſame propriety that ſome of our modern governments retain it, and perhaps from the ſame motive; that is, for the purpoſe of painting oppreſſive abſurdities with a favourite colour. There is a certain period in the æra of a republic, when licentiouſneſs becomes very

very troubleſome to the people, and to remove its noxious extravagancies, they voluntarily inveſt the executive branch with various modes of power, for the purpoſe of ſuppreſſing this evil in all the various ſhapes it may aſſume; but the moment the executive branch is inveſted with this neceſſary power, the freedom of the republic is at an end, becauſe there is no interpoſing power provided by ſuch a conſtitution to check it in its further progreſs; the ill conſequence of which deficiency is, that the government, (ever prone to encroachments,) availing itſelf of all advantages, will not heſitate to miſconſtrue juſtifiable liberties into acts of licentiouſneſs, and employ the power with which it is inveſted in ſubverting the liberty of the ſubject; and in the event, the free republic becomes an untitled ariſtocracy.

When the riot happened in London, the licentiouſneſs of the mob arrived at ſo dangerous and alarming a pitch, that it was found neceſſary to call forth the army to ſuppreſs it. This duty performed, the ſpirit of the conſtitution interpoſed, and aſſerted its

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ſovereignty by drawing a line, which the executive power muſt not violate by paſſing beyond it. It might have been ſuppoſed to have informed the executive power, that it had done its duty, and ordered it to ſtop its further progreſs, put up the ſword, and retire. This interpoſing authority, which is peculiar to the Britiſh conſtitution, was immediately obeyed; and future circumſtances may very poſſibly convince government of the wiſdom of its reſpect and obedience.

In the firſt ſitting of the National Aſſembly the long-wiſhed-for moment appeared, when the monarch found it prudent to reſign the abſolute virtue of his power, and ſubmit his meaſures to the unerring controul of reaſon. From this moment I exerciſed the effuſions of ſecret joy in thoſe offices of reſpect and reverence to the ſovereign, which I formerly deſpiſed in the courtier; with this difference, that mine were genuine and ſincere. I thought it manly and humane to endeavour, by ſuch reſpect, to reconcile his feelings to the loſs of ſo great a portion of his former power, and to eraſe every regret in the pro-

ſpect of that true happineſs he ſhould enjoy in the unfeigned loyalty of a free people. Setting aſide the duty of conſtitutional loyalty, I thought it ſound policy and prudence in the people to ſupply the loſs of a power, to which he was accuſtomed, with an additional portion of reverence and reſpect. The court party, though ſubdued, was ſtill formidable; and there were, in the unſettled ſituation of affairs, many means upon which their machinations might be exerciſed to dangerous conſequences; and the cordial reconciliation of the king to the new conſtitution was the only means by which their ſchemes were likely to be fruſtrated. The people were in poſſeſſion of an ineſtimable jewel, and prudence was as neceſſary as ſtrength to maintain it; and upon this principle they could not ſhew too much reſpect and affection to the ſovereign. The policy practiſed in the private affairs of individuals might have inſtructed them to diſcern the neceſſity of ſuch a conduct. A man foiled in combat, if he is loaded with ſcoffs, taunts, inſults, and rendered an object of contempt and ridicule, will find his diſgrace intolerable; his pride, degraded and mortified, becomes eager to embrace

embrace every ſuggeſtion that deſperation can preſent for the recovery of its loſt honour. All the faculties enter into practice with their utmoſt keenneſs, and no means are left untried that can contribute to the ſucceſs of revenge in the next effort; and who will be ſo confident as to foretell the iſſue of a ſecond conteſt. A prudent conqueror, acting upon gentleman-like principles, would uſe a kind complacency in his ſtile, and by decent flexibilities may convert a dangerous enemy into a ſincere friend. Yet ſuch is the depravity of human nature, that if ſuch a man could poſſibly be ſuppoſed to have any motive ſuperior to his own ſafety and intereſt in view, there would be many people found, who would readily and plauſibly interpret every word, action, and circumſtance in his conduct into treaſon and treachery againſt his own ſafety and intereſt.

While I was mayor of Paris, I conformed my public conduct to the line of that which I ſhould approve in an individual. I was grieved to ſee the feelings of the ſovereign daily wounded by unaccuſtomed jeſts, and

other groſs effuſions of wantonneſs. I wiſhed to ſee his preſence revered, but not dreaded; and during my mayoralty I exerted my utmoſt endeavours in preſerving good order and manners in the lower claſs of citizens. The old court party, I ſuppoſe, readily perceived the motives upon which my conduct was founded; and if they had any ſchemes or ſecret intrigues in agitation, I was totally ignorant of their exiſtence. Judging rightly of my principles, they were prudent enough not to tempt my honour to any meaſures that might prove injurious to the conſtitution, to which my fidelity had been moſt cordially devoted in all the ſacred ties of a ſolemn oath. If they had, I ſhould certainly have conformed my actions to the dictates of my duty. And no document will ever appear to prove (without a malicious interpretation) that either in thought, word, or deed, I entertained any idea that militated againſt the honour, ſafety, or welfare of the conſtitution. When commander of the northern army, I uſed the utmoſt of my influence to have the national forces augmented, and eſtabliſhed upon the moſt reſpectable and formidable footing; not

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with a view of engaging in a dangerous war, but if poſſible to prevent it. I thought the acquiſition of the people too precious and important to be hazarded at one ſtroke upon the doubtful iſſue of a war, wherein I conſidered all crowned heads as intereſted; I therefore preferred the operation of negociation to that of arms, there appearing a ſtrong probability that a well-eſtabliſhed peace would work a happy change in the political principles of any malecontents, and preſerve internal unanimity until the conſtitution, which was formed in the ferment of a general confuſion, ſhould benefit ſo far from the leiſure that peace would afford, as to digeſt itſelf into a permanent degree of perfection.

My attachment to the king went no further than was lawful and conſtitutional. I honoured and revered the conſtitution in him. I could not ſuppoſe that I was ſerving two maſters, whoſe views and intereſts inclined to different directions. In conſidering the natural diſpoſition of the old courtiers and their adherents, it was a neceſſary duty in all ſubjects to obſerve their conduct with a jealous

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but prudent vigilance. Confident that their machinations could not do much damage internally that did not terminate in their own ruin, the exiſtence of a foreign correſpondence was all I dreaded from that quarter; and the promptneſs which ſuddenly appeared in commencing hoſtilities was the firſt ſymptom that appeared to alarm my apprehenſions on that head. I inferred from the imprudence of this diſpoſition, either that this wicked ſet had worked ſo far upon the national pride and zeal in weak but well-meaning people as to make them inſtruments in incurring the united vengeance of the neighbouring powers upon the country, which they perhaps thought too ſlow in affording its ſupport to their infernal projects; or elſe, that the populace, intoxicated with the joy of their recent emancipation, were wantonly determined to ruſh into the wild and quixotic cruſades, for which the deſperation of inſanity could hardly be admitted as an apology. The rude and violent extravagancies of the mob in Auguſt, baffled all my hopes of ſeeing any efficient regularity eſtabliſhed in any mode or ſyſtem of governing, I thought it my duty to repair to

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Paris, and exert my utmoſt influence in oppoſing the over-bearing torrent, and if poſſible, to avert all ill conſequences, by contributing my endeavours to the ſupport of an enfeebled government; and if poſſible, to reſcue the country from the impending evils of anarchy; but the blind phrenzy of the thoughtleſs populace had arrived at too high a pitch to brook controul, or attend to any thing that did not favour their humours. I ſaw that the populace now held the reins of government, and as there was no apparent remedy, I returned to the army. My ſituation now became truly irkſome to me. Hoſtilities being determined upon, my duty was repugnant to my inclination, and my judgment became divided between both. The populace ſwayed the meaſures of government, and to maintain their approbation, it was neceſſary that the ſtile of all future correſpondence ſhould blaze forth in all the ſounding bombaſt of an empty gaſconade, which muſt appear contemptible and ridiculous to people endued with common ſenſe. All public letters muſt ſavour rankly of the groſs empiric's hand bill, wherein his noſtrums are boaſted

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to poſſeſs ſo peculiar a virtue in their operation, as to perform moſt wonderful and unprecedented miracles. To condeſcend to ſuch fulſome buffoonry degrades a man ſo far in his own eſteem, that I would not be a Cæſar upon ſuch paltry conditions. I was, however, reſolved to execute ſuch orders as I ſhould receive with the ſtricteſt fidelity, provided they were not ſo glaringly abſurd, as to render my reſignation a meaſure of duty to my country. I very plainly foreſaw that my diſpoſition was not calculated to keep long upon good terms with the populace, in brooking the capricious humours of ſuch humorſome maſters.

The cruelty with which the Grecian, and Roman republicans were wont to treat their greateſt generals and patriots, gave me an idea, not only of the precarious, but alſo of the dangerous nature of my ſituation. Whether ſucceſsful or unſucceſsful againſt the common enemy—if victorious—I muſt prepare againſt a charge of ambitious views—and of treachery if defeated—charges equally fatal to a delinquent with republicans. I had not the glory of a ſingle victory to juſtify any liberty

berty in me; yet when a juſt cauſe required ſupport, I was determined to uſe every liberty at every hazard in the ſupport of it.

But a certain ſociety (I ſuppoſe) kindly ſympathizing with me in my embarraſſments, were humanely reſolved to rid me of them; and for this purpoſe it was piouſly decreed, that I ſhould be aſſaſſinated at the head of the army. My reluctant compliance with the firſt law of nature, was at leaſt ſo fortunate as to avert an indelible reproach from the raſh, and ungovernable violence of their lawleſs intention.

Were I to travel the ſame political field over again, and to be governed by the ſame circumſtances, I know not a ſingle ſtep which I could honourably avoid the re-treading, though accomodated by experience with the knowledge of its tendencies. They are now ſatisfied, and I am contented; well aſſured, however, blind to the complexion of future events, that all's for the beſt. When a man means well in his actions, the unerring wiſdom of Divine Providence aſſumes the

direction of his conduct, and when ſafely led through the labyrinth of his perplexities, he will, on ſurveying what's paſt, be convinced that every incident, however diſagreeable, has in ſome meaſure contributed to produce a happy concluſion. Influenced by this opinion no misfortune can affect him, except in proportion to the degree that his conſcience tells him he merits; otherwiſe he becomes reconciled to it, as tending to ſome good purpoſe in its effect; he is not at a loſs to know when Heaven calls for the life it gave him. When truth and juſtice need a ſupporter, he perfectly underſtands the ſummons. In ſuch a cauſe, he imagines his nature already tranſlated from the human to the divine, and in his efforts he forgets that he is either mortal or vulnerable.

THE END.